

BEFORE THE SOUTH CAROLINA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In the Matter of the Revocation)
)
of the Educator Certificate of)
)
Meghan Colleen Dougherty,)
)
Certificate 258621)
_____)

**ORDER OF
PERMANENT REVOCATION**

SUMMARY OF THE CASE

The State Board of Education (State Board) considered this matter on November 10, 2015. On March 27, 2015, the Simpsonville Police Department arrested Ms. Meghan Colleen Dougherty and charged her with Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 2nd degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B) (Supp. 2014) as a result of allegations that she engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a 14 year old female eighth grade student. On March 31, 2015, the Chair of the State Board summarily suspended Ms. Dougherty's educator certificate. On March 31, 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Ms. Dougherty a notice informing her that her educator certificate had been summarily suspended and that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate 258621 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Ms. Dougherty received the notice on April 14, 2015, as evidenced by postal verification. Ms. Dougherty did not request a hearing in this matter and is in default.

After considering the evidence presented concerning Ms. Dougherty's unprofessional conduct, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Dougherty's educator certificate 258621, effective November 10, 2015.

FINDINGS OF FACT

Ms. Dougherty holds a professional South Carolina educator certificate and has over nine (9) years of teaching experience. Ms. Dougherty had been employed by the Greenville County School District (District) since August 2012 as a physical education teacher at Hillcrest Middle School (School). She also coached girls' soccer, volleyball, and intramural sports from 2012-2014. The District received a report from the mother of a female student that Ms. Dougherty had allegedly been involved an inappropriate relationship with her 14 year old daughter who was an

eighth grade student at the School. On March 26, 2015, the District discussed the allegations with Ms. Dougherty and Ms. Dougherty immediately resigned from her position with the District. The District promptly reported the allegations to the Simpsonville Police Department and to the SCDE. On March 27, 2015, Ms. Dougherty was arrested and charged with Criminal Sexual Conduct with a Minor, 2nd degree, pursuant to S.C. Code Ann. § 16-3-655(B) (Supp. 2014), based on an investigation into allegations that concluded Ms. Dougherty had engaged in sexual battery upon a fourteen year old female victim on more than one occasion between January 4, 2015, and March 25, 2015, in Simpsonville, South Carolina. Ms. Dougherty engaged in inappropriate communication with the student via social media, phone calls, text messages, letters, notes and a valentine card. She also engaged in physical contact with the student by kissing and touching the student in a sexual manner.

On March 31, 2015, the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) sent Meghan Colleen Dougherty a notice informing her that her educator certificate had been summarily suspended and that the State Board would meet to make a determination regarding the possible suspension or revocation of her educator certificate 258621 by certified mail, return receipt, restricted delivery, and regular mail. Ms. Dougherty received the notice on April 14, 2015, as evidenced by postal verification. Ms. Dougherty did not request a hearing in this matter and is in default.

After considering the evidence presented, the State Board voted to permanently revoke Ms. Dougherty's educator certificate 258621, effective November 10, 2015.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

"The State Board may, for just cause, either revoke or suspend the certificate of any person." S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-150 (2004). Just cause includes unprofessional conduct, immorality, conduct involving moral turpitude and evident unfitness for position for which employed. S.C. Code Ann. § 59-25-160 (2004); 24 S.C. Code Ann. Regs. 43-58 (2011). The State Board finds that Ms. Dougherty engaged in unprofessional conduct, immorality, conduct involving moral turpitude and demonstrated evident unfitness for a position for which employed, as a result of her inappropriate relationship and sexual contact with a female student.

The State Board finds that the evidence presented by the SCDE supports its decision that just cause exists to permanently revoke educator certificate 258621 issued in the name of Meghan Colleen Dougherty. The permanent revocation of Ms. Dougherty's educator certificate

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258621 shall be reported to the NASDTEC Clearinghouse and all South Carolina school districts within thirty days from the date of this order.

AND IT IS SO ORDERED.

South Carolina State Board of Education

By: _____

Traci Young-Cooper, Ed.D., Chair

Columbia, South Carolina

November 10, 2015